

Inspection of St Michael's Academy

Grass Royal, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4JW

Inspection dates: 27–28 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Michael's Academy provides a harmonious learning environment for pupils. In lessons and around the school, pupils are very well behaved. They are kind, supportive and welcoming. In addition, they are enthusiastic learners and strive to do well.

Leaders and staff provide effective support for pupils who may struggle with their emotions. For example, Buddy the dog has a calming effect on such pupils and develops their empathy and care for others. Pupils feel well supported to try their best and do well.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop academically, socially and emotionally. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy through elections to the student council. They take the role of representing the views of their classmates very seriously. Pupils also take on the role of anti-bullying ambassadors and buddies to ensure that every pupil feels safe and happy at the school.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about a breadth of subjects. For example, pupils can study archery, animation and stage design. Pupils also visit a range of different places to enrich their understanding of the subjects they study. For example, Year 5 pupils visited Fleet Air Arm Museum. They spoke knowledgeably about naval aircraft to inspectors.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed effective curriculums for the teaching of English and mathematics. Teachers ensure that pupils learn to analyse the ways in which writers craft the characters, settings and themes in their stories. Pupils use talk very well to explore their understanding and support each other's thinking. Pupils explore the intentions of characters in exciting texts such as 'The Girl of Ink and Stars' by Kiran Millwood Hargrave. Pupils enjoy reading and read widely and confidently.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. Through carefully sequenced lessons, pupils build upon their prior knowledge well. Pupils learn to evaluate their approach to solving mathematical problems. They articulate their approaches very well. Teachers check that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving on to more complex learning. Consequently, pupils have secure knowledge of fractions by Year 6.

Leaders and staff have created a calm atmosphere throughout the school, enabling pupils to focus on learning. Pupils are attentive in class. Pupils told inspectors about the importance of using 'super learning powers' to ensure that you try hard and achieve well. Pupils work well together. For example, Year 4 pupils were observed rehearsing their pantomime, 'Robin Hood', with great regard for each other's roles.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well cared for and enjoy learning. Leaders and staff enable most pupils with SEND to achieve well through additional support. However, leaders and staff have not ensured that some pupils with SEND receive well-targeted support, particularly in reading. For example, some pupils with SEND who struggle with reading do not read books that are age appropriate and accessible.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Leaders and staff provide additional support to help pupils to be more successful. For example, pupils read widely and confidently. Leaders and staff enable pupils to expand their understanding of the world through activities such as reading to pupils at the infants school and adults at the local care home. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) achieve well. Leaders and staff support their language needs effectively and ensure that they settle well into class.

Leaders have planned subjects in the wider curriculum thoughtfully. For example, the revised science curriculum has enthused pupils with its focus on practical experiments. However, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and knowledge as consistently as they do in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils' knowledge in some areas of the wider curriculum is not as secure.

Governors share leaders' vision for the success of the school. They are regular visitors to the school and gather pertinent information to challenge and support leaders. Staff state that they are proud to be members of the school. They also state that leaders care about their well-being and manage their workload effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are tenacious in ensuring the physical and emotional safety of all pupils. Leaders draw on a breadth of information to check the well-being of pupils. They act appropriately and in a timely manner when they consider a pupil to be at risk of harm. Leaders work well with external agencies to keep pupils safe.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders and staff care for the well-being of pupils. All pupils who spoke to the inspectors said how much staff cared for them. The pupils also said that they could talk to an adult at the school if they had a problem.

The school's checks on adults who work at the school are effective. Staff receive up-to-date training in keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils with SEND receive strong pastoral support and enjoy coming to school. Most pupils receive effective support and achieve well. However, the targets set by teachers are not always detailed enough to ensure that some pupils receive the most accurate and effective support. This is particularly the case with reading. Leaders need to ensure that the targets and support for some pupils with SEND are more precise and reflect their needs accurately, to ensure that they access the curriculum more successfully.
- Leaders have revised the curriculums for many subjects in the wider curriculum. Lessons are clearly sequenced to enable pupils to develop strong knowledge and understanding. However, pupils are not always secure in what they have learned and cannot consistently apply this new knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that staff check that pupils remember what they have learned and understand how to apply it.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138843
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10111614
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Ed Pyke
Headteacher	Mathew Vella
Website	www.stmichaelsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2017

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of education, health and care (EHC) plans is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders and governors.
- On the first day of the inspection, we focused on reading, mathematics, science and music. This meant that, in each subject, the inspector met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector met with staff to consider their views.

- The inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- The inspector considered the views of 37 parents who had responded to the confidential Ofsted parent questionnaire, including five free-text messages. The inspector also evaluated the views of 33 staff in the Ofsted staff questionnaire. In addition, the inspector evaluated the views of 49 pupils who responded to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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